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ABSTRACT

The week of May 1-7, 2000 has been designated by the Governor of Ohio to be Conflict Management Week With heightened awareness to issues of school safety, it is important for high schools to take an active role in promoting constructive responses to conflict. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of living, but managing conflict is difficult for many people because they have not been taught how to resolve differences in cooperative, nonviolent ways. However, appropriate responses can be learned, and this activity booklet/guide contains many resources that can help in the process. The guide first offers ideas for school-wide activities to draw attention to issues of conflict and peace. It then presents the six steps to conflict resolution, noting that conflicts abound in part because individuals have different values, needs, and desires. The guide provides activities for helping students become aware of underlying causes of conflict. According to the guide, in addition to learning steps of a conflict management process, teachers may also work with students to enhance the communication skills used in conflict management--these include understanding barriers to communication, using "I" statements, and improving listening skills. The guide also points out that making use of themes of conflict can invigorate subject areas across the curriculum and includes relevant resources, as well as a resource for exploring diversity. The guide is divided into four broad sections: School-Wide Activities; Learning about Conflict; Communication Activities; and Conflict Management across the Curriculum. (NKA)

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Let's Resolve Conflicts Together

Conflict Management Week
May 1 - 7, 2000

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HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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Conflict Management Week
High School Activity Guide

The week of May 1-7, 2000 has been designated by the Governor of Ohio to be Conflict Management Week. With heightened awareness to issues of school safety, it is important for schools to take an active role in promoting constructive responses to conflict. The resources in this guide will help you do that.

During Conflict Management Week your school may want to engage in school-wide activities to draw attention to issues of conflict and peace. Ideas offered by OEA and Educators for Social Responsibility are found in pages 1 –3 of this guide. A description of a process for improving the overall climate of the school through the use of the classroom meetings will be found on pages 4-5.

A first step in promoting constructive responses to conflict is to gain an understanding about conflict. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of living. Managing conflict is difficult for many people because they have not been taught how to resolve differences in cooperative, nonviolent ways. However, appropriate responses can be learned. The *six steps of conflict resolution* are shared on pages 7-8, including a poster that can be reproduced for classroom use. Conflicts abound in part because individuals have different values, needs and desires. If the cause of a conflict is understood, the possibility of lasting resolution is greatly enhanced. Activities for helping students be aware of underlying causes of conflict are offered on pages 9-14.

Communication problems can lead to misunderstanding and make conflicts more difficult to resolve. In addition to learning steps of a conflict management process, teachers may also work with students to enhance the communication skills used in conflict management. These include understanding barriers to communication, using *I* statements, and improving listening skills. Resources to teach these skills are included in this guide on pages 15-21.

Making use of themes of conflict can invigorate subject areas across the curriculum. Studies have shown that student comprehension and retention of material was enhanced when students applied conflict concepts and skills in their academic subjects (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)[1]. There are numerous ways to infuse conflict awareness into every area of the curriculum. A few of them are offered on pages 23-29. Finally, a resource for exploring diversity is included on page 30.

I hope you will find these resources useful and that you have a successful Conflict Management Week. For more information visit our website at www.state.oh.us/cdr/ or contact:

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[1] Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R. (1996). Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in elementary and secondary schools: A review of the research. Review of Educational Research, 66, 459-506.

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School-Wide Activities

A Week Against Violence

Some ideas from OEA's Peace and International Relations Committee.

To help OEA members organize the observance of a "Week Against Violence" in their own school system, the PIR Committee has compiled a list of suggested activities. The suggestions have been compiled from several resources, including the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which originated the Week Without Violence program nationally.

School activities

- **Peace graffiti wall.** Line a brick wall with brown or white paper. Add brick lines and the students, teachers and parents send a peaceful message.
- **Peace march.** Have students make their own peace signs. Take a peace walk.
- **Sing-a-long.** Invite parents and community members for an old fashioned peace sing-a-long.
- **Contests, contests.** Poetry, posters, essays, door decorating and more!
- **Fashion show.** Decorate hats, cardboard, T-shirts, buttons, etc. with peaceful messages.
- **Peace assembly.** Each class will share an activity from the suggested classroom ideas.
- **Peacemaker tree.** Each time a student completes a peacemaking task, fill out a leaf and add it to the tree.
- **Turn off the violence day.** Students and parents fill out a contract to turn off any violent TV program and work together on something peaceful. Post the contracts in the school.
- **Exchange readers.** Older students will read stories with a nonviolent message to younger students.
- **Peace toss contest.** Decorate frisbees with peace signs. Toss them for distance.
- **Peace cookies bake sale.** Decorate sugar cookies with peace signs. Send proceeds to an organization against violence.
- **Community guest speakers.** Ask members of the local and state government to speak about conflict and about ways to deal with it.

Classroom activities

- **Find kindness in the newspaper.** Create a collage of pictures and words demonstrating a peaceful environment.
- **Design peaceful bumper stickers.**
- **Develop a "Peace Newspaper."**
- **Read "Random Acts of Kindness."**
- **Create a nonviolence pledge** to be read every day.
- **Write a play** and perform for parents and other classes.
- **Create peace word searches** and crossword puzzles. Change the lyrics to a popular song to fit the peace theme.
- **Sponsor an essay contest** about violence.
- **Start a peace train** or corner for reading.
- **Perform a peace rap** or peace song.
- **Start a peace chain** for doing good deeds.
- **Come up with a peace quote** for the day.

- **Study the great peacemakers.**
- **Analyze the number/amount** of violent programs violence on TV and in music.
- **Write a letter** to the future me.
- **Write about what it will be like** ten years down the road, including one's hopes for peace.
- **Identify ten student acts of peace.**
- **Give students an "I have a dream"** writing assignment for making the world more peaceful.
- **Have students design** and put up peace posters.
- **Display a peace quilt.**
- **Make place mats and posters** and decorate grocery bags for businesses to use.
- **Contact the local police** department for ideas.
- **Paint a peace mural** on a wall in the school.
- **Study the amount of publicity** given to peaceful versus violent events on the front page of the newspaper.
- **Do a good deed.**

Community activities

- **Host an evening** of cooperative family games.
- **Sponsor a series of lectures** about handling conflict in the home.
- **Start a peer mediation** class for parents and kids.
- **Sponsor a safety fair** for children and adults to raise self-esteem and promote self-confidence.
- **Get involved in community service** projects (for example, food banks or work with senior citizens).

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September, 1996, pp. 10-11.

Ten Things Your School Can Do For Violence Prevention Day

1. **Develop a Violence Awareness Campaign**---Have students create posters, buttons, bumper stickers, etc., that promote non-violence and educate on the dangers of violence.

2. **Bring in Guest Speakers**---Your community has a wide range of expertise on the problem of violence and how to prevent it. Bring in representatives from law enforcement, domestic violence, conflict resolution, counseling, etc., who can speak to students and staff.

3. **Monitor T.V. Violence**---Television programming is a teacher. Have students keep T.V. logs in which they record the shows they watch and the acts of violence they see in those shows. Which shows are the most violent? Which stations air the most violent programming? Write letters congratulating those who don't.

4. **Implement a Conflict Resolution Program**---How are conflicts resolved in your school? Do the adults need more conflict resolution skills? Do the students? Explore establishing new conflict resolution procedures, implementing a conflict resolution curriculum, or getting training for students and staff.

5. **Hold a Non-Violence Book Fair**---Ask the librarian to collect and display books and other print and non-print materials related to violence and non-violence. This can include novels, picture books, recordings, videos, non-fiction books, and periodicals. This can be tied into a *Heroes and Heroines of Non-Violence* theme.

6. **Increase Cross-Cultural Understanding**---Divisions between people based on cultural differences can contribute to violence. But differences can also be valuable and enriching. Give students an opportunity to learn about the contributions of various cultures and a chance to discuss the difficulties and rewards of cultural diversity.

7. **Write Letters**---Let elected officials, news media, community leaders, and other decision makers know how you feel about preventing violence. Have students and staff write letters urging support of violence-prevention efforts.

8. **Support Anger Awareness**---Everyone gets angry, but it needn't lead to violence. Help students identify and practice constructive ways to express anger. Ask mental health professionals for help in locating such resources as discussion tips, role-play situations, and curriculum activities.

9. **Develop a Violence Prevention Plan for Your School**---Have staff and students develop a plan for dealing with school violence. Decide procedures for intervening in violent situations, and plan for ways to prevent violence from recurring by implementing conflict resolution, anger awareness, and cultural diversity programs.

10. **Inaugurate a School Peace Prize**---Recognize contributions to violence prevention. Form a committee to establish criteria and award certificates of merit to the students, staff, and community members whose efforts make for a more peaceful and constructive school community.

And Start Planning Now for Next Year, for a Violence Prevention Week!

Prepared by William J. Kreidler, Educators for Social Responsibility
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How It Works

To initiate a democratic classroom, begin by discussing the meaning of the word "community." Lead your students to the realization that each member of a community affects every other member. Then establish the fact that your classroom is a community and that every member has a right to express his or her concerns.

Display a decorated can or box labeled Community Concerns along with a pad of paper. Explain that anyone with a classroom-related problem can make a note and put it in the container. Concerns may be signed or submitted anonymously.

When the first concern appears, schedule a meeting. I have found it wise to set a time limit of about 15 minutes. Short meetings help students to stay focused and generate fresh ideas. Ask the students to arrange themselves in a circle so everyone can see and hear each other. Establish a few ground rules. For example:

> Take turns to speak.
> Every idea has value. No making fun of ideas.
> Everyone is equal. The teacher has no more power than anyone else.
> Listen while someone else is speaking.

There will be no voting. Discussion will continue until a consensus* solution is agreed upon or the group decides to disagree and go on to another topic.

Ask a student to reach into the Community Concerns box, pull out a concern and read it aloud to the group. Then just let the discussion flow. It is helpful for the teacher or student to list the topics discussed and the pros and cons of each idea so that the discussion stays on track.

In the beginning, the teacher may serve as facilitator of the meeting, making sure everyone has a chance to speak, maintaining the process and the ground rules agreed upon by the group, clarifying questions and concerns and asking appropriate questions to encourage consensus. Eventually, the students can take turns facilitating the meeting. In doing so, they will learn leadership skills and feel a sense of empowerment. At this time, the classroom teacher can "melt" into the group- allowing the true meaning of equality to become strikingly apparent.

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Southern Poverty Law Center with adaptations.

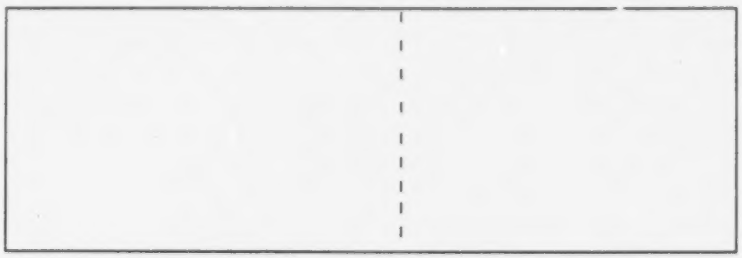
Pushing Back the Boundaries

Preparation: Roll paper and marking pens

Facilitator's Introduction: We have been learning about better ways for people to communicate, one on one. Today we are going to broaden our focus to explore the social climate of our school. We are going to ask ourselves which behaviors are generally acceptable, and which ones are not.

• Organize students into groups of four and pass out roll paper and marking pens (one large piece of paper per group).

• Draw a big rectangle on the blackboard, and ask students to draw one on their paper. Now draw a broken line delineating a box on the right side, and ask them to do the same. Write "ACCEPTABLE" and "NOT ACCEPTABLE" underneath, as indicated, and ask them to do the same on their paper.



ACCEPTABLE NOT ACCEPTABLE

Ask students: Think about your relationships at school: boy-girl, boy-boy, and girl-girl. Outside the box, make two lists: one list of aggressive or violent actions that are directed specifically towards girls, and another list of actions that are directed towards boys.

Actions directed to girls: Actions directed to boys:

Some examples are:

- Excluding a girl from your group because she says she wants to become a scientist;
- A boy telling his girlfriend who she can hang out with;
- Guys ganging up on a new kid because he wears pants that are too short;
- Bullying and teasing boys who are physically weaker.

Place the different violent or aggressive actions on either side of the broken line, according to whether or not they are considered acceptable within the social context of the school.

If you're not sure whether a certain behavior is acceptable, write it across the broken line.

Ask students from each group to report two of the items their group listed under each category, and write them on the flip chart.

Ask students what they wrote on the broken line, and have them write it on the flip chart.

Ask how they feel about these things that are straddling the line.

Q. How do you think these activities hurt people both emotionally and physically?

Q. Would you like these things to be in the "not acceptable" category? If so, re-draw the broken line. (This should be decided on a per-group basis.) If you do move the line, you're making a statement that you would like to have a bigger area for the activities that are not acceptable here at school. That's taking a big step in the direction of making this a Violence-Free School.

Closure: You have the power to decide what is acceptable in your relationships, and at school. If you would like to create a Violence-Free-School, you can help bring it about, but it's going to take a concerted effort. Teachers, administrators, and students are all going to have to pitch in together on this.

Reprinted from Healthy Relationships: A Violence Prevention Curriculum © April, 1994, with permission of Men For Change of Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada.

Learning About Conflict

6 Steps for Resolving Conflicts

...at home, at school, and in the community.

STEP 1. Begin the Process

Calmly approach the person you are having the conflict with, and explain to them that you have a concern that you would like to talk over with them. Let them know that you want their help resolving the problem. Agree to a few ground rules to help you discuss the problem. Ground rules may include:

Listening politely	No interrupting
No name calling	No physical violence

STEP 2. Share Your Concern (Facts and Feelings)

Share your feelings about the situation with the other person. Tell them why you feel the way that you do. When finished, politely ask them to tell you, in their own words, what you just said to make certain they understand your point of view.

STEP 3. Listen to the Other Side of the Story (Facts and Feelings)

Ask the other person for their view of the situation. Listen carefully to what they have to say. Once they have finished, retell their side of the story, in your own words, to make sure you have a clear understanding of their point of view.

STEP 4. Clarify the Issues

After you have discussed your feelings about the situation, explain what you feel is the cause of the problem, and find out if they agree. If not, ask them what they think the problem is. More than one problem may exist. Agree to try to resolve each problem, one at a time, step-by-step.

STEP 5. Brainstorm and Agree to Solutions

Brainstorm possible solutions to help resolve the problem. Each person should feel free to share their thoughts about what may successfully resolve the situation. While brainstorming remember to practice the ground rules you agreed to in the beginning.

When you have finished brainstorming, decide which of the possible solutions will work best for resolving the matter. They may be different for each of you. Keep in mind when agreeing to solutions that each one should be:

something you can do;
something that is not dangerous or harmful in any way;
something that can prevent the problem from happening again.

STEP 6. Bring Closure to the Situation

Once the conflict is resolved, thank the person for their willingness to work with you to solve the problem. If you are not able to resolve to the problem, seek the help of an outside party or agree to disagree peacefully.

Developed by Nicole McDonald, Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management

HOW TO SETTLE DIFFERENCES

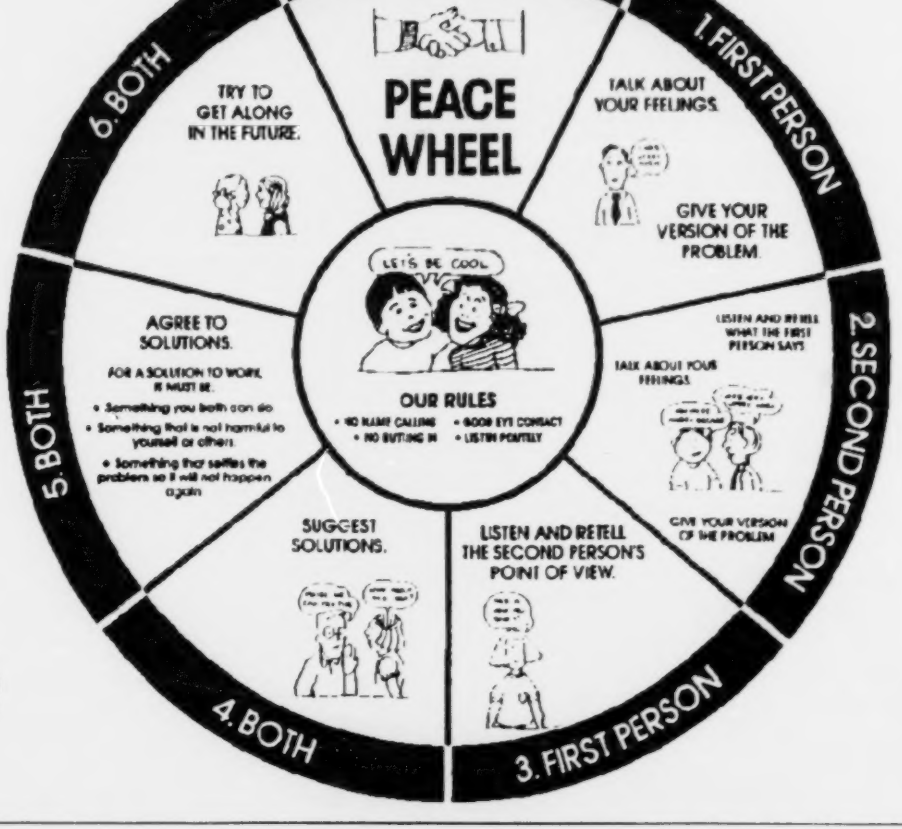
Resolution is a settlement between them

TAKE TURNS

Everybody Wins

AVOID

Sometimes it's not worth the bother. Let the other person have it.


PEACE WHEEL
1. FIRST PERSON
2. SECOND PERSON
3. FIRST PERSON
4. BOTH
5. BOTH
6. BOTH
TRY TO GET ALONG IN THE FUTURE.
TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.
GIVE YOUR VERSION OF THE PROBLEM.
LISTEN AND RETELL WHAT THE FIRST PERSON SAYS
TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.
GIVE YOUR VERSION OF THE PROBLEM
LISTEN AND RETELL THE SECOND PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW.
SUGGEST SOLUTIONS.
AGREE TO SOLUTIONS.
FOR A SOLUTION TO WORK, IT MUST BE:
• Something you both can do
• Something that is not harmful to yourself or others
• Something that settles the problem so it will not happen again
LET'S BE COOL
OUR RULES
• NO NAME CALLING
• NO BUTTING IN
• GOOD EYE CONTACT
• LISTEN PATIENTLY

GET HELP

People who may be counted on for a fair decision include friends, parents, teachers, religious leaders.

APOLOGIZE

"I'm Sorry" doesn't mean "I'm Wrong." It lets the other person know that you are sorry about the situation.

Reprinted with permission from *Creative Conflict Solving for Kids* by Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman, © 1985 the Grace Contrino Abrams Peace Education Foundation

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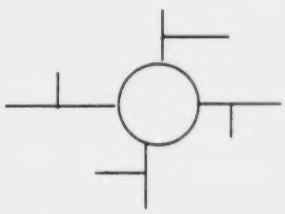
What Is Conflict?

Objective: Drawing on familiar experiences and personal perceptions students will develop a working definition of conflict and consider what makes some conflicts worse than others. Students will also complete an initial assessment survey about interpersonal conflict.

Materials: Newsprint, markers, handouts: "What is Conflict Worksheet"
"Survey About Me and Conflict"

Procedure:

1. Write the word CONFLICT again on the board or on newsprint. Ask the class what they think of when they hear the word "conflict". Brainstorm all the words and phrases that come to mind and make a WEB CHART of responses around the word CONFLICT. You my want to use different colored markers to write words and phrases or circle categories of words in different colors when brainstorming if finished (purple = wars and violent responses to conflict; red = feelings; green = sources of conflict; orange = negative words which describe conflict; blue = neutral or positive words describing conflict or words that imply nonviolent means of resolving conflict).



2. Ask students how they would differentiate the word groupings you have circled or written in different colored markers. Discuss some of the aspects of conflict noted in #1 above. Explain to students that we often see conflict as a negative or destructive experience, rarely seeing disagreements and differences as constructive opportunities to learn, change, and grow. You may want to make another web in which you generate words that describe ideas, feelings, and actions associated with resolving conflict and problem solving.

Suggested discussion questions:

Is a fight different than an argument? How? Why do conflicts become violent?
How do you feel when a conflict isn't worked out?
Are conflicts always bad? Can conflicts ever be positive - have good endings?
How do you feel when you've successfully resolved a problem?

Can you think of a conflict that helped you learn something about yourself or other people?
Can you think of conflicts you've experienced that actually improved the situation in the long run?
Could there be a world without conflict? Why? Why not? If conflict is a fact of life, if we can't make it go away do what do we do with it?

3. Ask students to work in pairs and compose a working definition of conflict. See if the class can agree on a definition that incorporates various responses. Pass the handout "What Is Conflict Worksheet" or write all or part of the definition on the board to discuss.

4. As a class, discuss the conflict continuum on the handout or draw it on the board or newsprint. Ask students to share experiences and examples that would match the meaning and intensity of each word or phrase. What changes as you move to the right on the continuum?

   Remind students that in this exploration of conflict we will be looking at conflict as an opportunity, that our goal is to explore the choices we can make when we experience conflict. As we work with conflict we will be learning systematic ways to think about conflict and building skills to deal with conflict more effectively.

Assessment: Give each student a copy of "A Survey About Me and Conflict" to fill out. Remind students to be as honest as they can as the respond to the questions. Assure them that other students can compare their original responses with their responses at the completion of your unit on conflict. The survey also provides you with a good data base for creating role-plays, conflict situations, and verbal responses that you can use in conjunction with other exercises.

Reprinted from Making Choices About Conflict, Security, and Peacemaking, Carol Miller Lieber. © 1994 by Curators of the University of Missouri for the Center for International Studies, University of Missouri-St. Louis, with permission 1-800-370-2515.

Basic Needs Are At the Root of Conflict

Purpose: To understand some of the underlying causes of conflict.

Materials: Drawing of a tree on butcher or chart paper. "Basic Needs" handouts. skit. (following pages) magic marker. Post-its

Lead-In: "Most of us can live peacefully with our own faults. but the faults of others get on our nerves" *Banking*

Directions:

[1] On the wall or chart stand. place a drawing of a large tree with long branches and spreading roots.

[2] Divide students into groups of 4-6. Ask each group to take two minutes (a) to decide what are the five most common conflicts and (2) to write each one on a separate Post-it. (Examples: name-calling. rumors. different expectations. assumption. resources. time. money. position. space. material goods. property. values. unmet needs.)

[3] Tell students that most conflicts happen because one or more of the 5 basic needs are not being met. Each of the 5 main categories of "Needs" (words below in **bold**) is printed on a separate card. Descriptive words are written on the back of cards.

- **Belonging:** [loving. sharing. co-operating. "fitting in" w others]
- **Power:** [feeling important. being respected]
- **Freedom:** [making choices]
- **Fun:** [laughing. playing. finding joy in life]
- **Security:** [feeling safe from put-downs. ridicule]

[4] Five students are asked to volunteer. Each is to face the group and hold up one of the "5 Basic Needs" cards. They are to identify the "need" on their individual card and read the explanation which is on the back of the card. (Students are teaching their peers.)

Understanding this concept can help us to avoid taking the negative behavior of others so personally. It also helps us not to automatically "blame" the other person or think he/she is just a "jerk." Instead. this person can be seen as someone who is. like the rest of us. trying to get his/her needs met. and perhaps this is the only way he/she knows how to act at this time.

[5] **<u>Skit to illustrate the concept and to check understanding:</u>** Have several students prepare ahead to act out a short skit showing a conflict situation. (Example of skit follows.) After watching the skit. students analyze the unmet needs (root of the conflict) of those involved.

[6] Refer back to several of the conflicts on the branches and have students identify some possible unmet needs.

Processing: Why is the identification of need so important in resolving a conflict?

Skit for "What's At the Root of Conflict?" activity:
(Cut on lines in order to give each of the three actors the following skit description.)

Rasha and Tim are talking in the cafeteria.

Christy walks by and Rasha starts trying to get Tim to put ice down Christy's back, just to see if they can "get her going!" Tim doesn't want to do it but Rasha keeps pressuring him. Tim let's Rasha talk him into it.

Tim walks over to Christy, puts ice down her back, and runs. It catches Christy off-guard--she drops her tray--is real embarrassed (everybody in the cafeteria is looking.) She is furious, runs after Tim - doesn't catch him, and has to go back and clean up the mess she made dropping her tray. Some of the students standing around are roaring with laughter.

Teacher stops the role play at this point by saying "Cut!" Audience analyzes the "unmet needs" of each character.

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Teacher stops the role play at this point by saying "Cut!" Audience analyzes the "unmet needs" of each character.

Rasha and Tim are talking in the cafeteria.

Christy walks by and Rasha starts trying to get Tim to put ice down Christy's back, just to see if they can "get her going!" Tim doesn't want to do it but Rasha keeps pressuring him. Tim let's Rasha talk him into it.

Tim walks over to Christy, puts ice down her back, and runs. It catches Christy off-guard--she drops her tray--is real embarrassed (everybody in the cafeteria is looking.) She is furious, runs after Tim - doesn't catch him, and has to go back and clean up the mess she made dropping her tray. Some of the students standing around are roaring with laughter.

Teacher stops the role play at this point by saying "Cut!" Audience analyzes the "unmet needs" of each character.

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Things That "Bug" Us

Guidance, Health, ISS

Objectives:

The students will:

- describe acceptable responses to things that upset them.
- explain why it is important to control negative behavior.

Materials: writing materials for students; chalkboard and chalk

Procedure:

Distribute writing materials, and ask the students to write down 10 things that really annoy them. Provide several examples, such as: *intimidation in the hallways, having too much homework, cigarette smoke, losing a game, getting a bad grade, being teased or laughed at, etc.*

Write the following headings in a single row across the top of the chalkboard: "Things That Bug Us!" "Our Feelings" and "How We Express Our Feelings."

When the students have finished their individual lists, ask several volunteers to each share one item. Write these on the board under the heading, "Things that Bug Us!" List about 10 items.

Go through the list, one item at a time. Ask the students to share some of the feelings they typically experience when confronted with each situation listed. Write these feelings in the second column. Then, go back through the list of feelings and ask the students to describe how they might express each one. Record their responses in the third column.

Finally, read across the chart and examine each row and item more closely. Ask the students to identify modes of expression that might be dangerous, get a person in trouble, and hurt others. Draw lines through these items. Ask the students to identify responses that are likely to have neutral or positive effects. Circle these items. Discuss why the circled items represent better ways of responding to annoying situations.

Discussion Questions:

1. What would happen if people never controlled their emotions and everyone expressed anger and frustration freely, with no thought about consequences? What would life be like?
2. How do people control their feelings? How do you control yours?
3. Would you rather have controls come from outside you or inside you? Why?

Extension:

Use this theme as the topic of a writing or art exercise: Have the students describe or draw a picture or a society in which people have no controls, internal or external, on their behavior.

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How My Feelings Affect My Behavior

Check off all the feelings, reasons, or situations that have ever been a cause of, or at least related to, your anger or a conflict you were involved in.

I needed to relax or to relieve tension.

I was angry at someone else.

I was trying to fit in with a group, to impress other people.

I was having problems at school.

I was having problems at home.

I wanted to feel important, to show power.

I needed a role, an identity as a tough person.

I was feeling bad about how I looked.

I was depressed about my family.

I was depressed about an argument with a boyfriend or girlfriend.

I was mad at a teacher because of a poor grade.

I was feeling weak and tired.

I was really jittery or anxious already.

I was not getting enough sleep.

I was feeling very lonely.

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Communication Activities

Barriers to Communications

Language Arts

Objectives:

Students will become aware of the many factors that interfere with good listening.

Materials: Individual slips of paper with one of the barriers below written on each.

Procedure:

Discuss the meaning of "barrier to communication." Brainstorm with your class to formulate a list of behaviors that interfere with good listening. List them on the board.

Pair volunteers. Ask each group of two to choose one of the slips of paper and to prepare a role play to demonstrate that barrier for the class. Ask the class to tell which barrier was being role-played.

Lack of concentration
Different knowledge levels
Lack of motivation
Trigger words and name calling
Cultural differences
Misunderstandings
Lack of trust
Lecturing
Humor
Physical appearance
Environment
Different meanings given to same words
Giving unwanted advice and suggestions
Different importance placed on issues
Body language
Lack of commitment
Disruptive emotions
Different values
Unequal power
Prejudice
Frequent interruptions
Physical wellness
First impressions - prior contacts
Poor listening skills

Discussion: Students may note that all the items listed above are not always barriers and, at time, some of the items may enhance communication. For example, good body language, humor and physical appearance can enhance communication among people. Invite students to give suggestions for overcoming the barriers.

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Communication Slip-Ups and Blocks

Slip-Ups
You can probably see why there are so many slip-ups in communication. Many times a sender just assumes that the receiver knows what he or she means. Other times, a receiver thinks "Oh, I get it" and completely misinterprets the message.

Describe a recent incident in which your communication was misinterpreted.

_____

_____

Why do you think this happened? _____

_____

Describe a recent incident in which YOU misinterpreted the communication of someone

_____

_____

How did this happen?_____

_____

Communication Blocks
Here are more behaviors that seriously hamper communication -- or stop it altogether.

Interrupting/Dominating
People interrupt because they:
1. get impatient when a speaker is slow to transform a thought into a statement (encode a message).
2. are reminded of something they want to say and can't wait their turn.
3. are more interested in their own thoughts and ideas than in those of others.

Have you ever tried to have a conversation with a person who continually interrupts you? How do you feel when this happens?

Advising
"Well, if I were you..." or "I think you should..." or "Take my advice and..." By giving unasked for advice, a person immediately takes a position of superiority. Advice-giving says, "I know better than you do."

Judging
Not only does a "communication judge" assume a superior position in conversation, but his or her judgments may be completely wrong. For example, suppose you say to someone, "I have a dog named Charlie." The person responds, "What a good person you are -- all dog lovers are fine people. What kind is it?" You answer, "A poodle." Your listener responds, "Oh, that's too bad. Poodles are high strung and hard to train."

Probing
Asking lots of questions tends to put the speaker on the defensive. More importantly, questions can lead the speaker away from what he or she wants to say. For example, suppose you are trying to describe your day to a friend. But as soon as you mention the first thing that happened, your friend asks, "What did you do that for? What happened? What did she say?" etc.

Accusing/Contradicting
Suppose while talking to some friends, you say, "I wrote this paper on my computer." One of the friends jumps in with, "No you didn't, since when have you had a computer?" You respond, "I bought it with money I saved." To which the same friend says, "You never have any money, so how could you save money?" Contradictions and accusations put the speaker on the spot and cause him/her to get defensive.

Criticizing/Name-calling/Putting-down
Suppose you say, "I have a dog named Charlie." Your listener responds, "You jerk, what did you get a dog for? You can't even take care of that mangy cat of yours!"
Criticism can make the speaker feel wrong or unworthy. Few of us want to continue a conversation in which we are being criticized. Name-calling and put-downs are frequently veiled in humor, but may still be hurtful and damaging to a relationship.

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by Dianne Schilling and Gerry Dunne © 1992 by Innerchoice Publishing

Preparing "I" Messages

When we talk about difficult situations, those about which we have strong feelings, we need to be careful about how we say things. We don't want to make the situation worse by angering or confusing the other person. We need to be able to give important information about ourselves quickly, clearly, and in a way that encourages the other person to work with us to find a solution. Some suggestions:

✔ Talk about yourself, about what you feel, need, want, and think.

"I have a problem, I feel angry. I need more clarity from you about meeting times. I want to be able to plan the rest of my day. I think this problem is serious."

✔ Begin your sentences with "I", rather than with" You."

"I feel hurt and neglected when you don't let me know you will be late for dinner" is more likely to be heard than" you don't care about me anymore. You are late on purpose to ruin dinner and hurt my feelings!."

✔ Use neutral language, and be as specific as possible.

"I can never count on you" is vague, but "I got angry when you forgot our meeting yesterday" provides specific information about how someone's action made you feel.

✔ Do not call names, blame, characterize, or judge.

"You are so stupid, people like you never remember to write down meeting times. You'll never improve your work habits." --these statements only anger the other person.

✔ State your positive intentions to resolve the conflict.

"This difficulty between us really concerns me. I think if we sit down and talk, we can make things better. I'm willing to spend the time necessary to improve the situation."

✔ Tell the other person that you want to listen to his or her viewpoint.

"I realize we may each see this problem in a different way. Your point of view is important to me. I will make time to listen to everything you have to say about this problem."

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Communication Rules of the Road:

No "You" statements. Use statements that begin with the word "I". Do not use statements that include the word "you," because these statements make people feel defensive.

Slow. Remember, it takes time to settle a conflict. Go slow at first, because conflict resolvers usually encounter some rough roads in the beginning. Keep using your I-way map to reach safer roads.

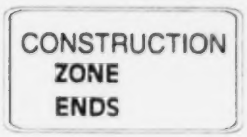
Detour Ahead. Sometimes tempers are flaring so much that it may be necessary to take a temporary detour from the communication I-way. Once the tempers have calmed down, you may begin using I statements to solve the problem.

Exit Ahead. Most conflicts can be resolved through effective communication. However, if you begin to feel threatened or unsafe, you should exit the communication I-way and seek safety.

Construction Zone. Construct an I-way statement by following these directions:

- use the word "I"
- state how you feel
- state the specific behavior that you do not like
- state your willingness to cooperatively resolve the problem

Merge Ahead. After using properly constructed I-way statements, individuals can begin to share ideas for how to solve the problem. Often, the best solution is reached when two people merge their ideas together.



End of Construction. After reaching a solution that the two individuals agree will work, they can resume normal activities.

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Communication I-way Worksheet

Below are several conflict situations. Please construct an "I" statement using the Communication I-way Map as a guide.

Situation 1: Mark is yelling at James because James changed the channel on the television from MTV to VH1. Mark is calling James names and telling him to turn it back or else Mark will pound him.

James says to Mark: _____

_____

_____

_____

Situation 2: Monica heard from a friend that her friend Angela was trying to steal Monica's boyfriend.

Monica says to Angela: _____

_____

_____

_____

Situation 3: Monroe is two minutes late for class for the third time in two weeks and the teacher does not appreciate his tardiness.

The teacher says to Monroe: _____

_____

_____

_____

Situation 4: Pepe received the highest grade on the test. Naomi grabbed Pepe's test off his desk to look at his score than announced it to the class.

Pepe says to Naomi: _____

_____

_____

_____

Situation 5: Jerome is walking to his locker when an older student bumps into him and then begins yelling at Jerome about being stupid and clumsy.

Jerome says to the older student: _____

_____

_____

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The Art of Listening: Hearing the Real Message

Subject: Language Arts

When you are a receiver, your job is to listen. Even more than that, you need to hear, to watch, and to sense. It's an art!

Listening can be difficult, especially when a speaker disguises his or her message. Sometimes people are too embarrassed or afraid to come right out and say what they want to say.

Suppose your friend asks you, "I'd look pretty good if my nose weren't so big, don't you think?" Inside, your friend hopes you will say, "Your nose is just right and you look great!" And if you are able to hear and sense what he or she *truly needs* at that moment, you'll respond to the *real* message.

Do you know someone (a friend or teacher perhaps) who knows how to listen so well that when you say something to him or her, you really feel understood? Does this person sometimes hear you even in silence? What is the secret of people like this? What do they do?

Chances are they look directly at you, and they seem interested in what you're saying. They may ask a question or two for clarification, but they usually don't interrupt much. They may repeat in different words (paraphrase) what they hear you say. Or they may focus on the feelings or meaning behind your words, so you feel heard on a deep level. You may not be aware of it, but they are probably noticing other things too--your nonverbal messages or "body language," which give added clues to the meanings and feelings behind your words.

How Does It Feel?

Can you remember a time when someone really listened to you?
Describe what happened and how you felt about the person.

_____

_____

_____

Can you remember a time when you listened well to someone?

The Art of Listening

- **Listen in order to understand.** Don't get ready for what you are going to say next.
- **Pay attention to more than words.** Notice tone of voice, facial expression, posture, etc.
- **Try to put yourself in the speaker's shoes.** Listen for feelings.
- **Put aside your own opinions for the time being.** You can't listen to your own thoughts and someone else at the same time.
- **Be Patient.** Listening is speedier than talking, so don't jump ahead of the speaker.
- **Show your interest and empathy.** This can encourage a speaker to say more, to dig deeper into an issue or problem.
- **Don't interrupt.** Ask questions only when clarification is needed.
- **Clear up misunderstandings before you begin your own talk.**

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Conflict Management Across the Curriculum

Understanding Conflict Across the Curriculum

Conflict management skills can be taught in the context of the standard adopted curriculum subjects, such as language arts, reading, social studies, health, science and math. This method of teaching conflict management saves time as both conflict management and required content are taught at the same time. This method also shows children that there are real life applications for the conflict management skills they are learning. Some examples of ways conflict management can be used with existing curriculum follow.

As you teach conflict management skills you will discover many opportunities to model and to incorporate these life skills into the curriculum. You may want to consider linking conflict management with academics.

1. Look at the objective of the lessons to be taught.
2. Look at the suggested activity for achieving the objective.
3. Consider the concepts and skills required to manage conflict nonviolently.
4. Decide if

- the suggested activity can be adapted in such a way that it can achieve both your primary objective and a conflict management objective
  or
- if a different activity could be used that would accomplish both objectives.

For example: your objective is to review for a test on content. If the activity for doing so is oral review, you might add that each student must paraphrase what the person before said before answering. The added objective would be to practice active listening and paraphrasing.

Language Arts

Listening skills are an important part of language arts. Active listening can help students to reinforce aural comprehension.

1. Teach active listening skills to help students focus on main points, restate, and listen for feelings, as well as facts.
2. Use listening skill activities as warm-ups before reading a story out loud or presenting a lesson.
3. Ask students to restate what characters are expressing in a story.
4. Pair students up and have one student tell about a conflict he/she has had while the other student listens for three minutes. Then have the other person restate what he/she hear. The students can reverse roles.

Speaking skills are another essential part of language arts. In everyday interactions with others it is important to be able to identify and express feelings. For most students this is difficult as they have a limited feeling word vocabulary. Developing this vocabulary and their ability to identify feelings can increase their ability to empathize with the characters about whom they read.

1. Provide activities that will increase the students feelings vocabulary and will help them to identify feelings.
2. Brainstorm feeling words and put them on a web.
3. Have students tell about a time when they felt a certain feeling.
4. Have students identify how characters in a story are feeling.
5. Have students write about feelings or use feeling words in a story.
6. Teach students how to organize their thoughts, feelings and needs and state them in a clear concise way.

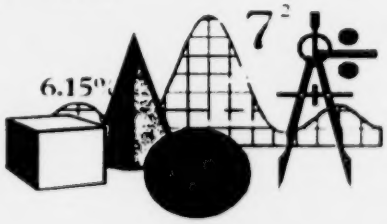
Reading provides many opportunities to analyze conflict situations

- What effect did the conflict have on people involved?
- What choices/options were available?
- What would you have done in this situation?

Math

Problem solving is as much a natural part of mathematics as it is of conflict management. Consider the following ideas:

1. Separate the relevant information in a story problem from the irrelevant data.
2. Balance equations as a parallel for fair and equitable, win-win outcomes.
3. Apply logic to evaluating potential solutions. Will the choice really solve the problem?
4. Tackle dividing irregular polygons into equal pieces.
5. All conflict resolution involves solving puzzles. Apply the steps to solving mathematical puzzles to conflict situations.



Science

Examining conflict in nature is a great approach integrating science and conflict management. Consider the following possibilities.

1. Relate air and water pressure to anger management.
2. Study friction and lubricants as an analogy to conflict management.
3. Compare optical illusions to the problems of differing perspectives.
4. Consider the lessons that can be drawn from working with magnetism, chemical reactions, power sources, constructive and destructive uses of energy.
5. Study controversial environmental issues from both viewpoints.
6. Compare the scientific method to problem solving.

Art/Music

Consider these:

1. Listen to songs that promote peace and nonviolent conflict resolution.
2. Study harmony and dissonance.
3. Consider what elements in a musical composition escalate and de-escalate emotions.
4. Consider how tension, tone, and contrast are valuable in artistic works.
5. Develop art projects around the theme of promoting peace.
6. Design jigsaw puzzles.

Social Studies

Government, history, and sociology all deal with people and problems. Consider integrating lessons on conflict in these ways.

1. Study biographies of peacemakers.
2. Examine the causes of war.
3. Examine how different cultures deal with conflict.
4. Participate in local, state or nationally debated controversies.

Developed with contributions from Martha Green, PLOWSHARES, Glenford, OH 614-659-2322.

More Ways to Practice Across the Curriculum

Art

Cartoon Strips. Strengthen students' artistic abilities by having them create cartoon strips that show how to handle anger-provoking situations. Ask them to have one character respond in a positive way to someone's annoying behavior. Invite students to post their strips on a bulletin board and or read them aloud.

Teaching Tip: Use fights, arguments, and other negative encounters between students as "teachable moments." After tempers have cooled, discuss how the people involved responded to the problem. What did they say to one another? How did they say it? How might they have handled the situation more effectively?

Think of a Better Way. Invite volunteers to describe how they responded to the anger-provoking behavior of a classmate, friend, brother, or sister—without naming anyone. Select some situations for students to act out with a better approach, expressing their feelings in a more helpful way. Then discuss how different approaches lead to different outcomes.

Social Studies

Anger for Change. Have students work as individuals, groups, or a class to list things in the school or community that are unfair and make them angry, such as older students not sharing the playground equipment with younger students. Select several common concerns to explore as a class. Discuss how the students might use their anger to take positive action and address these problems.

Letter Campaign. Read aloud letters people have written to local newspapers about issues that upset them. Then encourage students to write to business or government leaders and express their own concerns, along with possible ways to address those concerns. Before mailing the letters, read several aloud and post copies on a bulletin board. Discuss and post any responses to students' letters.

In the News. To promote interest in current affairs, have students bring in news stories that describe the consequences of expressing anger in negative ways. Discuss how calming down, thinking things through, and talking things out might have changed what happened.

Expressing Anger is a component of a comprehensive conflict management program, Lions-Quest Working It Out 1995, with permission of Quest International.

Structured Controversies

Structured controversies promote conceptual conflicts. In order to maximize student achievement, student critical thinking, and student use of higher-level reasoning strategies, teachers need to engage students in educational conflicts within which they have to prepare positions, view the issue from a variety of perspectives, and synthesize the various positions into one position. The frequent use of academic controversies allows students to practice their conflict skills daily.

Taken from Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers
Interaction Book Company
David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, 1991

Procedure For An Issue Controversy

Goals:
1. Work together to reach the best decision.
2. Reach an individual, informed opinion.

Steps: Each group of four follows these steps.

1. Form groups of four. Within each group, make two teams, A and B.
2. Define the issue or problem and identify the two positions.
3. Assign team A to one position and team B to the other.
4. Each team researches their position and articulates the main ideas and details to support it.
5. All teams assigned the same position can periodically work together to share their information.
6. Within each group, team A presents its information to team B. Then team B presents its information.
7. Questions go back and forth.
8. Each team switches perspectives and summarizes the other position accurately and completely.
9. The group of four complete a pro con analysis of each position and reaches a decision. Each member of the group must be able to state the group's decision and the support for it.
10. Finally, each individual writes a justified personal opinion as to which position to support.

Excerpt from Issue Controversy Social Studies Department of Pomperaug High School
Region 15 Public Schools, Southbury, CT 06676

Conflict Management Art Slogans For Making Posters

Friends Stick Together Like Glue

Don't Fight, Do What Is Right

Don't Let Your Temper Explode

Don't Lose Your Cool

Be Honest And Sincere

Fighting Only Brings Tears

Be A Glamorous Person Fight Fair

Be A Hero Not A Bully

Forgive And Forget

Don't Horse Around And Make Excuses

Tackle The Problem, Not The Person

Hands Are For Helping, Not Hurting

Don't Put Others Down

The Blame Game Won't Get You Anywhere

Hitting Isn't Cool

Attack The Problem, Not The Person

Be Smart, Don't Start Fighting

Don't Be Cruel To Others

Don't Wreck Your Friendship

Don't Be A Bully

Be A Friend To The End

Be Nice About Solving Problems

Keep Cool, Don't Be A Fool

Respect People's Property

Stop In The Name Of Peace

The "Music Listening" Exercise

Language Arts, Music

Objective:
The students will practice paraphrasing and listening for feelings.

Materials: two or three contemporary songs (tape or C.D.) that have clear lyrics and express strong feelings.

Procedure:
Tell students that an important part of conflict management is listening and understanding what others are saying.

Explain that you want the students to participate in an exercise that will sharpen their listening skills; say that music will be used to practice accurate listening.

Play a segment of a song. Ask someone in the class to tell (paraphrase) in his/her own words what the singer said. Caution the students not to add to or subtract from the message of the singer. Once the paraphrase is made, ask the students if they think the listener was accurate. If not, ask the student to improve the paraphrase until everyone is satisfied that the feedback is accurate.

Repeat this paraphrasing process for several more musical segments.

Tell students that you are going to play the same segments again (or new segments) and this time you want them to identify the feelings of the singer.

Re-play the segments. Ask students to identify the feeling(s) being expressed.

List the feelings identified by the group.

Next, play several musical segments and ask students to restate the singer's message and feelings. Suggest that students say, "He/she is feeling _____about _____."

Conclude the exercise by explaining that the students have just combined the essential parts for an active listening response.

Suggest that before the next session they spend time *hearing* what other people (on TV, compact discs, family, friends) are saying and feeling.

Reprinted from Dr. Thomas Gordon's Youth Effectiveness Training Instructor Guide
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Effectiveness Training Incorporated.

1. Make a list of the groups you belong to. Be creative. See how many you can come up with. For instance, I'm a woman, right-handed, brown-haired, middle-aged, city-born, college-educated, white Southern writer, eldest child in a family of four girls raised by two rural-born parents of Irish-English-French-Native American ancestry.

2. Now try to come up with a list of things you have in common with people from other groups. Make this list as long as your first one...longer, if you can. Next, make a list of foods, films, books, or music relating to other cultures that you tried this year. Make a list of things you'd like to try in the coming year.

3. Being scared and feeling some pain and anger can be useful. Try to remember a time when you felt afraid, hurt, and angry because of someone else's words or actions. Focus on those feelings. Let yourself experience them again. The next time you see someone being discriminated against, recall your painful feelings and do something about the injustice you see.

   In his book, *A Gathering of Heroes: Reflections on Rage and Responsibility*, African American writer Gregory Alan-Williams describes how his own memories of being taunted and threatened inspired him to rescue a Japanese American man who was being beaten by a group of black youths during the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Remembering his feelings motivated him to take action.

   (This suggestion comes from the National Conference "Anytown USA" workshop. For more information about this summer camp and other National Conference programs, write or call: The National Conference, 71 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1100, New York, NY 10003. Telephone: (212) 206-0006.)

4. Think of three common stereotypes you believe or biases you have. If you can't think of any right away, try a technique called "free association":

   1. Across the top of a sheet of paper, write the names of two different groups. (For instance, "Texans" and "Football players.")

   2. Add "all" or "always" to each name. (Examples: "Texans all/always," "Football players all/always").
   3. Underneath each name, write the first three things that come to mind. Don't stop to think. Just write.

   Your examples might look something like this:
   - "Texans all own oil wells and wear boots and cowboy hats."
   - "Football players all get lousy grades, take steroids, and date the best-looking girls."

Where do you think you learned your stereotypes? Do you have classmates, relatives, or friends who feel the same way? How about TV, movies, the newspaper?
(By the way, how many Texans, football players, and skinheads do you know personally?)

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